DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 089 FL 013 272

AUTHOR LaVallee-Williams, Marthe
TITLE Demystifying Verbal Structure and Forms in Second Language Teaching.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the International Conference on Foreign Language Education and Technology (1st, Tokyo, Japan, August 18-21, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Skills; Communicative Competence (Languages); Language Skills; *Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Teaching Methods; *Verbs; Vocabulary

ABSTRACT

A review of the history and current status of second language instruction practices reveals ways to facilitate the acquisition of fluency and communication ability. Because verb forms are central to most languages, demystification of verb forms should be the first practical task of language teachers. Analysis shows that the numerous structural and formal modifications of verb forms can be reduced to a surprisingly small number that can be readily mastered by students. For example, in French, less than 70 combinants will yield accurate reading and writing skills, while less than two dozen phonemes will provide a high degree of aural comprehension and oral effectiveness. These basic verbs and combinations are shown in accompanying tables as an example of how the difficulties of learning new languages can be reduced. Such information is easily transferable to a computer format for use in language laboratories. (RW)

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Demystifying Verbal Structure and Forms in Second-Language Teaching

Marthe LaVallée-Williams
Temple University

While we are all dismayingly familiar with the neglect of language study (and I dare say it is world-wide), we are ourselves responsible in large measure; indeed our failings may even be reprehensible. Most of us are now bored with the constant repetition of this unfortunate situation, the reiteration of the dismal story. We "blame" social, cultural and personal factors for this neglect, notably the abysmal state of literacy in our schools, and, by extension, in theatre, film and, above all, television. If we were frank, we would "blame" in equal degree the Sputnik era which brought a brief period of prosperity to language study. Or rather, the October 1957 launch of the first orbital object in space brought personal prosperity to language teachers by packing our classrooms, opening language institutes and grant, fellowship and customer potential. This surge is common to all fashions and immediately perceived needs; high-energy physics, engineering, law, accounting--any peak profession will surely follow grammar, rhetoric and dialectic into apparent oblivion unless it transforms itself.

Yet the last three, which were the matter of the trivium, were the study of inner space, of language in its written and oral forms, as opposed to the quadrivium which studied matter. Language defines man, not the reverse. "Man does not exist prior to language, either as a species or as an individual. We never find a state where man is separated from language, which he then creates in order to 'express' what is taking place within

Originally presented at the First International Conference on Foreign Language Education and Technology (FLEAT), Tokyo, Japan, August 1981. Résumé in NAALD/LLD Proceedings of FLEAT, Fall 1981.

him: it is language which teaches the definition of man, not the reverse."[1] As Barthes and his interlocutors agreed, there are no archaic languages, only those fallen into oblivion or disuse; and there is no true history of language progressing from simplicity to complexity, only different degrees of usage and metamorphoses of signifiers, transformations of communicative signs in oral or written discourse.

The matter of the trivium, furthermore, has been displaced by distinction between language and literature for writers (the scripteur vs. the écrivain) and between langue and langage, tongue and language, for speakers, listeners or readers. In the written forms, some writers make language its own object (Robbe-Grillet, Barthes, latter Sartre, Ionesco, perhaps Günther Grass and, before them, Mallarmé, Kafka, Jarry). In our day, structuralists, neo-structuralists and post-structuralists, e.g., Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Althusser, pursue--or deny--human history through the speculum of language. On one side linguists, sons and daughters of Durckheim, Saussure, Jakobson, engage in discussions and controversy with Todorov, Lévi-Strauss, Lucien Goldman. In criticism, language and literature are reunited to a degree: Tzvetan Todorov quotes Valéry: "Literature is, and can be nothing other than, a kind of extension and application of certain properties of language."[2]

However, the other side is "us," as Pogo would say, and all too often the equation is complete, "the enemy is us," inimical in our hide-bound, self-pitying and morose state to our greatest responsibilities and promise. We have neglected to look within, to marvel at the roots of our subject and to understand how those languages we teach really work.

The old saw has it that any given language must be easy: "Look, every

little kid in France knows French, every little youngster in Kyoto rattles on in Japanese," etc. Usually accompanied, of course, by the self-deprecating admission that two, or three, or four years of language study have left the wry victim with nothing but trite phrases, possibly with grudging fondness for the language studied, too often with a hatred of it, floating on a sea of disillusion, disappointment and disgust. The glaring fact is that most people do not persist in language study, even of their own, much less a second, or third, unless unusual circumstances provide encouragement, motivation and reward. Today's cliché is that languages are difficult to master unless, 1) they are learned in childhood, or 2) pressing need dictates mastery. The palpable contradiction is stunning; furthermore, both statements are demonstrably false.

If, barring almost total physical disability, every child learns his or her native language, a new subset of linguistic studies reveals what every parent or guardian or nanny knows, that children grope, transform, experiment and succeed or fail in fits and starts. However, we are learning that there are discernible stages in these processes. Noam Chomsky, in his generative work of 1965, Aspects of the Theory of Syntax, and especially in Language and Mind[3] has instigated a most useful, yet halting study of childhood language learning. Obviously there are innumerable studies of children's literacy, learning processes and achievement. One might go back to 1762 for Jean-Jacques Rousseau's L'Emile and thence forward to Jean Piaget's life-time work.[4]

Current research, reflected in such studies as those underway at Columbia University's graduate childhood education program[5] may bridge these

gaps while Jacques Lacan attempts to unify psychoanalysis and linguistic-literary criticism. For example, beyond the obvious "mama" and "dada" stage of primal pre-recognition of "the other(s)," a child of three apparently proceeds by using morphemes, attached to the basic phonemes, to indicate a relationship or stage. From a person (or animate object?) that provides warmth, food, comfort, the child moves to recall by naming objects that cease to exist when out of sight. (I would add sound since we can observe nine to ten-month old children seeking animate objects with their eyes when they hear a voice or related sound.) At about two-and-a-half to three years, children comment on the disappearance or processing of things with verbal forms. "All gone!" defines the disappearance of pudding ("fini," "finito" or "nito" are familiar equivalents). At five years of age, my sister defined a beloved animate object as well as her sibling rivalry by stating firmly that "Ma chat a un beau queue, elle!" While the forms for the possessive and qualifying adjectives and the article were amusingly incorrect, and the disjunctive pronoun for emphasis added a quirk to French gender distinctions, the message was clear.

The emergence of linguistic and pedagogical studies of so-called "Black English" used by young adults in college entry or remedial studies in English composition courses has revealed a series of underlying grammatical and syntactic conventions simply opposed to standard English. Such cognitive and sympathetic schemas are presumed to indicate underlying strata of other languages, assumed to be African originals, lost, twisted or modified by contact with other African or Amerindian languages. Some have posited in colloquia that these marginal or non-conventional morphemes are self-signifiers, studiedly maintained to express hostility, or revulsion, independence

in opposition to masters who enslaved through written illiteracy as well as slave labor. At one colloquium of the College Composition and Competency Conference, (Washington, D.C., March 1980), the conflict between such deep roots and pride in race, and the need to learn correct, or competent expository English in writing were expressed by many experienced teachers. To greater or lesser degrees, such stresses exist among speakers, including educated or cultivated ones, or variants of several languages, e.g., between northern and southern Italians, "French French" vs. "Canadian or Québecois French," when vocabulary and syntax may differ. We all react to the similarity and differences of pronunciation and accent by the preferences we show, the jokes we make and the un- or sub-conscious judgment we make about our interlocutors.

This has been a very rapid, and necessarily succinct, review of the situational complexities we face as language teachers. I shall admit immediately that I found listening to the tapes of basic Chinese and Japanese provided by Japan Airlines that I could better hear, and perhaps imitate, vocalic values in Japanese, that the phonemic values and phoneticized equivalents in Chinese were depressingly difficult, probably garbled. Nonetheless, I was encouraged by self-evident patterns that emerged. If I could hear and see them, my profound conviction is that students, no dimmer than I, can too; more crucial still is my belief that our primary duty as teachers of language is to act on some of the previous data. I shall list some of them briefly and then illustrate what I consider the central fact of language study.

Fundamental to all these factors is the undeniable fact that all

ordinarily gifted human beings learn their basic language, however limited it may be, but that most learn little or none of any second language, at least not unless they are forced to by parental circumstances, cultural or economic dictates or for professional use. Sometimes two or more factors will overlap. On the whole, no more do people learn a second language than master the piano, the koto, higher mathematics, or astronomy. It takes too long, it is difficult and--for most of us--it is not necessary to survival.

Furthermore, most teaching has remain bogged down in traditional ways that deepen confusion, discouragement and frustration, provide little joy, few short cuts, and neglect the establishment of levels of satisfaction. We tend to teach all students all languages all the same ways and with the same goals. Finally, language teachers are woefully apt to ignore linguistics, theoretical or practical.

It is true that the supposed revolution of "audio-lingual" or "oral/aural" methodology, funded as well as founded in the stress of international competition, attempted to define and fuse the four skills. But this was an anomaly which broke the forlorn tradition of mere reading, barbarous translation and literary acquaintance, objectives that were the baggage of classic and humanistic education, extended to general populations by the revolution of universal education during the nineteenth century. Since such competence was limited to the élite of the aristocratic or upper bourgeois classes even during the humanistic periods, much as Latin (and some Greek) was the province of the clerics in the Middle Ages, its effectiveness was even more severely diluted by the extension of obligatory education. Competence remains limited to the cosmopolitan élite.

The disappointment in and ignorance of second language study were often compounded by the vast movements of populations who were either compelled or urged to "assimilate" by adopting a new home language, abandoning bilingual or multi-lingual mores. Examples abound, but one familiar instance is the three-generation family of Italians and Italo-Americans in the United States between 1890 and 1950: the grandparents spoke their original Italian, one of its dialects or regional forms; the sons and daughters spoke American English even as they retained passive comprehension and limited oral ability while the grandchildren were totally immersed in contemporary English. Eventually the surge of second language study with four-skills' learning, and the swell of ethnic pride of the mid-twentieth century peaked by the end of the sixties to subside to today's levels, perilously close to that of 1948-55. The numbers grew astronomically at first, then shrank. More alarming, the percentages have shrunk even more rapidly than the numbers.[6]

Whatever these statistics reveal, they do not show attitudes, either those of teachers or of students. Not very long ago, I read in one of my learned journals that French had been the very "in" language to study in Philadelphia, Boston, Newport, New York and even in some of the smaller cities of the southern states in the period before, during and immediately following the American Revolution.[7] French was even considered a useful adjunct to Latin, Greek and Hebrew for the fledgling Harvard University--providing the lowly instructor who did not enjoy full faculty status conducted himself appropriately; indeed he seemed to be somewhere between a coach in fencing and a graduate assistant or assistant vestryman. Ladies

and gentlemen of the larger port cities or provincial capitals dallied with French conversation and manners (read "culture" as our language manuals treat it). Yet just a few years later everything French was detested. Now it is easy to see that the political strength of a language was directly related to the aid that French forces were bringing to the colonists' revolt, but that the estrangement between the new United States and France, especially during the French revolution and the Napoleonic era, quite overwhelmed any deep attachment to the language of the Enlightenment shared by Jefferson, Monroe, Franklin, et al.. Our colleagues who run "critical language" study programs feel these permutations every semester. In addition, the attrition rates are directly correlated to the distance between the target language and the student's own. Russian, for example, grew in popularity during the Cold War and dropped sharply with the erection of the Berlin Wall. Nonetheless, although enrollment figures climbed, the attrition rate was even higher. A close parallel is to be found in the momentary attraction of Swahili while the black movement gained impetus in the early fifties.

In a word, our peaks are almost always precipitous, our valleys deep and wide, the short exaltation followed by desperation. Many of us, expectedly, groan at not having taken up more featureless landscapes of work, such as pharmacy, medicine and law, for bodily ills and retribution are constants in life. It is a tragedy, since the inner world is so intimately basic to our ability to function in the outer world, our mastery of language qua language so wed to our command of human and physical nature.

Yet, aside from crash courses, usually limited in scope and duration, we insist on taking a panoramic knowledge of any second language as the norm. The broad scope and knowledge in depth may be our best resource, but

they are our worst enemy as pedagogues in praxis. The chasm between language knowledge and language teaching for the great goal of language learning is enormous.[8] Note the distinction between the forms of the substantive, knowledge, and the verbal function of the participles, learning and teaching. This dichotomy seems to me symptomatic and symbolic of our malaise. Protestations arise when efforts are made to ease the process; in the name of standards, competency, humanism, national and international needs, we cling to the totality of some illusionary method. And the students flee as quickly as they can. An equally real, persistent and destructive force is the snobbishness so prevalent among language and literature departments that literature study is and must be the crowning jewel in language study, that the best professors are superior to the labor of language teaching for its own sake. Hiring, tenure and promotion practices have consecrated this insidious bifurcation and unjust reward system.[9]

Having underlined the verbal quality of the central problem--that to teach and to learn are the twin activities of the noun, knowledge, the startling fact that, removed from parasitic considerations, verbs are the quintessence of adult language study is clear. If the child gurgles "Papa," "Mama," and other indeterminate sounds, decipherable only to loving parents, he or she spins to the verbal frames for the uniquely human communication that Piaget denotes as the first glimmer of cognitive levels.[10] Chomsky and his successors, I believe, follow--or co-discover--this principle in adducing the generative and transformational features of syntactic structures. Whether they seek universals, or "the higher, the level of Descriptive Adequacy," or, earlier, a more tentative "condition of generality," they aimed at a topology "when the grammar gives a correct account of the

linguistic intuition of the native speaker, and specifies the observed data (in particular) in terms of significant generalizations that express underlying regularities in the language."[11]

Whether linguist or specialists in a particular language talk about their subject of study,[12] the nexus is always active, i.e., verbal, language. Signs, phrase markers, root transformations, predictors of ungrammaticality, the preservation or loss of the middle voice, etc. all center on the role of the verb. Research and theorization on ellipsis, anaphora, "center-bedded phrases," and perceptual semantics seem to depend on verbal forms of a language (subject-verb-object vs. object-verb-subject, subject-object verb, object-subject-verb syntax) for crystallization. Even morphemes of declensional inflections are governed by verbal function of case; pronouns change by intention (e.g., interrogative vs. relative), but that intention is expressed by the verb choice of the speaker. In French, for instance, who may be qui ....?, qui est-ce qui?/qui est-ce que? ... in interrogative forms, or qui ... or que ... in relative phrases. The transformation occurs as the third person is agent, or projected subject in the interrogative structure; in the second instance, the pronoun form is changed according to its reference as projected subject or object of the relating subject. In Spanish, quien changes to quién orthographically. Everywhere either simple or complex markers are related to speaker's intent through the choice of verb. There will be communication, if not academic correctness, only when a verbal form is enunciated.

Our students' immediate reaction is inevitable: in most, if not all languages, verb systems offer an intricate, confusing and baffling set of

forms or placement for person, number, tense, mood differentiation. Every textbook reflects some approach to this central problem. Some will begin with the largest class of verbs, such as -er or first conjugation verbs in French; others will insist on thorough mastery of a basic distinction such as ser/estar in Spanish, or successive presentations of basic words also used in compound tenses, such as être/avoir, or sein/haben. Universally--for good reason--class and book feature the present tense. From there on, it is downhill.

The quasi-universal tendency is to begin with an I--You, or self/other, opposition, or, as Sartre would have it, to oppose the subject/object forms. With his usual ingenious perception, Lacan says that in effect this is the mathematical abstract of "n plus 1," i.e., that he/she/they do not exist (The Structuralist Controversy, p. 191). Of course, some languages use third person verbs for the "polite" you. Psychoanalytic and sociopsychic studies may comment on this. Even French opposition between first and second person verbal morphemes (je chante/vous chantez) are replaced by third person forms in certain cases: a servant speaking to master or mistress ("Madame désire quelque chose à boire?"), reflecting historic and highly formal address ("Nous osons demander que Sa Majesté/Sa Sainteté Le Pape," etc.) or in ironic discourse ("Ah, il est/on est fatigué "). Let me note that in all verbs, the familiar, friendly or intimate tu--second person--forms, the verb form is the same for every verb, even the most highly irregular, save two, avoir and être, j'ai/tu as and je suis/tu es, and then the third person sounds exactly like the second person singular. Your own quick mental processes will establish the similarities and differences for other languages. In the second and third conjugations as well

as in many irregular French verbs, as well as in the first, the familiar second and third persons singular will also sound the same, often be spelled the same: je danse/elle danse/tu danses/ils dansent; je/tu/il finis(t); je/tu/elle vend(s)(d), while the third person plural merely adds a consonantal element. You sense my point immediately, for my goal is to simplify rather than complicate the task of the learner. This reduction is not to demean language, but to enhance the empathy of the student for another tongue (langue), and to speed his or her progress.

My preparations for this presentation were enhanced by the thoughtfulness of Japan Airlines whose representatives sent me maps, brochures, restaurant listings, even condensed railway timetables. Above all, I enjoyed the several phrase books and booklets about Japanese language and, in particular, the tapes of basic phrases in Japanese and Chinese. The latter tapes were boxed with a self-instructional type fan cassettes of the text in phonetic transcriptions that allowed me to practice courteous and necessary tourist phrases. However, I found that even a cursory examination gave me some clues which I have been applying, helter-skelter, but with fairly good effect. Without benefit of instructor, grammar book or dictionary, I figured out some things in those notoriously difficult languages.

Some world-weary traveler is said to have remarked that all one had to do in Japan was to bow slightly, say "Hi" vigorously and speak American words with intermediate vocalic u after every consonantal cluster, tacking on "des" to each sentence. In theory, "Besorubolu des?" with rising inflection would then point him unfailingly to the nearest baseball park. Well, at least this is an improvement over the nineteenth century Englishman

who simply boomed or shouted at the "natives," or the flamboyant twenties' American who spoke a fake pidgin-English ("me tired, where bed?") or the colonial Frenchman who sighed over the failure of the Academíe Française's effort to civilize ("civiliser = parler français") the entire world.

Still after only a few minutes, I could say with confidence that terminal "kah" indicates an interrogation, "des" does indeed indicate state of being, "ney" appeals for agreement, that "sen" conveys negative intent and that "mas" hints at need or distress.[13] Think of how that encouraged me to look for other patterns in more meaningful groups.

All practiced and generous-minded teachers, especially language pedagogues, have their favorite gambits, tactics and mnemonic devices to share; most resist rules that befog rather than clarify. Unfortunately, rules, however helpful, tend to sink into the mind more clearly and resistingly than usage. For example, most students can reiterate the "me, te, se, nous, vous, le la, les, lui, leur, y, en" table of pronoun complements in French. How many can use the sets correctly without painful back-tracking? Therefore, clever teachers insist on combining this useful graph with increasingly rapid practice through transformation exercises; the cleverest apply visual and auditive keys with spontaneous gestures and rapid vocal movement. We know quite well that the students who can <u>say</u> "Il me les a montrés," "Nous lui en avons parlé," or "Je ne le leur dirai pas" will automatically write similar sequences--even should some miss the past participle agreement in the first case. The latter error, if sorry, is readily correctable; the pronoun sequence is absolutely central to idiomatic French on even an elementary level.

Since verb forms are the heart of the matter, their demystification and subsequent control should be our first practical task.

The most modest texts and dictionaries are furnished with full paradigms of regular and the most common irregular verbs. Usually the textbook introduces high-frequency irregular verbs, distributed through the first two or three semesters of study. In the lesson sequence, the regular and irregular verbs follow the tense sequence adopted according to the philosophy of the composer-editor, almost universally delaying the past and future tenses until some supposed level of mastery is achieved in a variety of syntactic and semantic complexes. The appendices, of course, list the verbs in classic sets: indicative present, imperfect, future, preterit, compounds, followed by subjunctive mood, and so forth. Whatever the clarity of the paradigms and verb listings, the pattern is conjugational.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, no one speaks or writes in conjugation, artificial series of number, tenses, moods, or sets of paradigms. A good teacher invariably mixes persons, singular and plural, in classroom teaching, but is too often hemmed in by textbook and programmatic restrictions. At the least, the teacher will bounce between the I-You opposition, point dramatically to third person(s) in order to create habits of oral forms. The same teacher will then be distressed by finding that student Jones has added an "s" to the third person singular of "il aime" because the student is accustomed to English third-person singular orthography. The same teacher will be saddened by Student Polanski's tendency to pronounce the third person plural signifier in "elles aiment." Such chiasmatic counterstructure makes no sense, but it is too common to ignore as a symptom of

rigid presentation and poor assimilation.

Furthermore, students must inevitably resist sheerly rational, grammarian limitations on the use of tense and mood. It may be systematic to insist on the use of the indicative present tense of a limited number of verbs while students supposedly master a hundred or so semantic terms, placement of negative and interrogative elements and conform to an approximation of comprehensible pronunciation and intonation in the target language. It is unreasonable not to expect the student to wish to express personal reactions, knowledge and experience by jumping from the present to the past to the future, from mood to mood. If we teach our students, quite effectively, to say that they dance, they will inevitably wish to say that they danced last night, they are going to sing and dance next week, that they are delighted to dance, hate to sing, are good or poor at these charming activities.

I wish then that we would forget about our systematic target languages' formal structure and remember what language is really defining and defined by, i.e., human communication. Let us teach our students to tell us and each other that they dance badly, or well, they sing for their families and friends, that they will be dancing all summer, and that the grasshopper was sorry he had sung and was told by the ant to dance for his supper in lean wintry times. Such constructs appear very complex--and they are--but they are both "meaningful and relevant" to the learner. Let a pronoun or two be misplaced, let an agreement or preposition collapse, but let the student rejoice in speaking for his or her heart and mind.

"But verbs are so complex, so detailed, so important!" says the impatient teacher. True. Therefore, with our own knowledge of those

complexities and transformations, we can simplify the task by making them as close to automatic as patterns learned by children of five and six years.

Instead of lengthy paradigms, let us present to our students a reduced set which will eliminate much error and enhance linguistic action.

In French, which I use as an example, ninety percent of the verbs in their seven--or even six--common permutations constitute the mountain of effective speech, reading and fairly sophisticated writing. Yet less than seventy combinants will yield accurate reading and writing skills. Less than two dozen phonemes will guarantee a high degree of aural comprehension and oral effectiveness. By clinging to the past's diachronic presentations and the artifices of grammarians, we ignore the natural, irresistible yearning to express modes in time, contrast and interlocking relationships. To say "I dance every weekend; do you sing? have you gone dancing recently? I'm sorry you and she havent't danced together!" is a real goal, readily perceived and achieved by students.

Nonplussed by our students' supposed bad will, laziness and "inappropriate" gropings, we have tried to supply discipline and structure rather than meaning or ease. They are wrong in thinking a new language easy; we are wrong in assuming that easiness is necessarily an intellectual or linguistic evil. We ignore the potential of our laboratories, computers and workbooks and bury our own humanistic leanings and linguistic knowledge.

On the attached graphs, I have shown, rashly perhaps, that six basic French tenses, or even five and a half (counting the passé composé in indicative and subjunctive moods as a doublet of the avoir/être auxiliary

verbs) will yield a maximum of forty-six transformations, with a mere twenty-three sufficient for oral use. Terminals on laboratory computers will readily show the student those cases when an oral or orthographic change must be made for correctness. The pre-eminence of oral/aural contact reduces chance of error. "J'aime danser, tu aimes danser, il aime danser"--all sound the same in the verbal elements; even the third person plural is more a matter of sentence structure in the liaison--"ils/z/ aiment danser." The first and second persons "nous aimons and vous aimez" are so distinctive that they threaten to dominate unless properly subdued. The student is really ready to say that "j'aurais/tu aurais/il aurait/ils auraient dansé vs. nous aurions/vous auriez dansé" if the emotive and social or cultural or temporal context has been wedded to the terrible verb, rather than been conjugated.

In the accompanying chart, the permutations have been listed by phonemic commonality in upper case, the orthographic distinctions by underlining. I have purposely omitted purely literary tenses, such as the passé simple, passé antérieur, imperfect and pluperfect of the subjective, since they are now relegated to advanced stages of literature or diplomacy. I even omit all but the most common forms of the imperative since it is easier grammatically and more desirable socially to use periphrastic forms which are readily assimilated and infinitely more pleasing to us all. "Voulez-vous" plus any number of infinitives is quick, more courteous and effective than harsh commands.

I shall welcome any comments on ways of reducing this new paradigm further, or making its presentation clearer. If my estimate that ninety percent of French verbs in these six most common permutations (present,

past, imperfect, future, conditional and present subjunctive) requires only sixty-six combinants, for the three basic conjugations, representing two, three and two stems plus five to fifteen written terminal forms, our work is successfully reduced even in a fairly elaborate workbook. Furthermore, the twenty-three phomemenes are even more limited for effective aural/oral correctness in a sharpened language laboratory tape and computer program.

Laboratory work would be simplified for our students and computer testing would be eased by the simple fact that multiplication gives way to simplification. In the second stage, similar reduction applies to important, if frightening verbs, such as croire, partir/sortir, even faire and dire with their odd second person forms.

The foregoing is not proposed as the paramount, much less the sole, method of approaching the teaching and learning of any second language. For French alone, we have dozens, if not scores, of intelligent and loving ways of making this enjoyable as well as profitable for our students.[14] I agree that starting with the present is the quick entry, but object that leaving such typical, quintessential forms as the present subjunctive traduces humane and humanistic use of French. Every language will have its discernible patterns for the teacher's masterly treatment. Now we can let our students handle sources such as Le Nouveau Bescherelle[15] or their advanced grammar appendices when they must decipher the niceties of a Proustian sentence with its periodic interlocking of tenses. Meanwhile we may have a new population of Students Jones, Calvino and Suzuki delight in telling the world that they are hungry, fancy swimming and would like to visit each other's cities.

I leave you now, in some trepidation as I go out with my Japanese phrase book, counting up to twenty with great self-confidence and hoping to find out just how one does say "I am as happy as you are" in Japanese. Arigato gohmennahsai....

Marthe LaVallée-Williams
Temple University

FOOTNOTES

[1]Roland Barthes, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?" The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man, René Girard, Richard Macksey, et al., ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 135.

Cf. "We are convinced that when we insist that languages retain their legitimate place in American education, we are arguing more in the national interest than in our own. A country can hardly commit a more catastrophic mistake if it neglects to integrate its younger educated generations into the fabric of its economy and condemns them to become disgruntled and embittered revolutionaries." Henri Peyre, "On the Humanistic Value of Foreign Language Study," Profession 80, selected articles from the Bulletins of the Association of Departments of English and the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADE and ADFL) (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1980) p. 29.

[2]"Language and Literature," The Structuralist Controversy, p. 125.

[3]Noam Chomsky, Language and Mind, rev. ed., (Cambridge: MIT, 1972).

Cf. Comments on language users' accuracy and child vs. adult word games in Janice Moulton and George M. Robinson, The Organization of Language (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 29-30, and Appendix C, "The Language Acquisition Game," pp. 359-362. V. also De Saussure tr. Wade Baskin, eds. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye and Albert Reidlinger, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959).

[4]A wide-ranging view of the latter's work and reflections is to be found in Jean-Claude Bringuier, Conversations with Jean Piaget, translated by Basia Miller Gulati (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). A satisfying juxtaposition of Chomsky and Piaget can be found in Language and Learning: The Debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky, ed. Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). This is a translation of Théories du langage: théories de l'apprentissage, transcripts of debates held at the Abbaye de Royaumont, October 1975. Howard E. Gruber judiciously pointed out that Piaget's studies of cognitive development do not indicate what "specifics" might be innate in language, nor "did Chomskyites ask: if something in general cognitive development is constructed in the life history of the individual, what might it be, and how might it contribute to our understanding of language?" (New York Times Book Review, October 19, 1980.)

[5]Illustrative reports and comments offered at the 47th Annual New York University Conference on Foreign Language Education, March 1981. V. also Roman Jacobson, Child Language, Aphasia and Phonological Universals, (The Hague: Mouton, 1968) original publication Upssala University, 1941.

[6]Most governments issue statistics through the appropriate departments or ministeries; professional organizations, for purposes of vocational and graduate training, usually publish their own, joining the state agencies, or using them as sources, to govern the flow of new academic members, to pursue new avenues of support and to maintain either a state of exhilaration or of depression. For example, the United States Department of Education--currently a cabinet level agency--and the Modern Language Association publish national figures, while states maintain yearly records: UNESCO has gathered statistics from member nations for more than a decade.

[7]

[8]David Crystal condemns the "time and money...wasted in maintaining the naïve, egocentric purism which colours so many judgements about language. "...much of the unsatisfactoriness of traditional approaches to language is due to their prescriptive attitude towards their data: writers were concerned to make rules about how people ought to speak and write, in conformity with some standard, or set of standards which they considered primary. They were not concerned so much with ascertaining how people did speak and write."

Linguistics, (Middlesex, England and Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1971) pp. 72-73.

[9]Leon I. Twarog, and E. Garrison Walters, "Mastery-Based, Self-Paced Instruction in Foreign Languages at Ohio State University," The Modern Language Journal (spring 1981), 65,1, and reprint and proceedings of the first and second conferences, The Ohio State University, May 1979 and October 1980, pp. 18-19. The Ohio State University project owes much of its success to the faithful, secure and dedicated senior professors who were above such pejorative distinctions and to the single-minded and selfless dedication of the junior colleagues.

[10]V. Jean Piaget, Language and Learning, passim.

[11]Chomsky (1964a, p. 924), cited by Frederick J. Newmeyer, Linguistic Theory in America: The First Quarter-Century of Transformational Generative Grammar (New York: Academic Press, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 83.

[12]Although trained to be primarily teachers of language and literature, we should all be as familiar with the source of much of our own methodology as well as that of most of our currently used texts, as with the primary sources of our critical and historical knowledge. Certainly one of the greatest is Ferdinand de Saussure, Cours de linguistique générale (Paris: Payot, 1916), tr., as Course in General Linguistics tr. by Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959). V. also Leonard Bloomfield, Language (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1933).

[13]Speak a Little Japanese, Japan Airlines, February 1980; Jet Age Language: Japanese Language (Tokyo: cassette tape and text, Japan Airlines, n.d. /1980/.)

[14]Among the most practical and widely respected are: Nelson Brooks, Language Learning: Theory and Practice (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961); Frank M. Grittner, Teaching Foreign Languages (New York: Harper and Row, 2nd ed., 1977); Robert L. Politzer, Teaching French: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics (New York: Blaisdell Publishing of Ginn and Co, 1965); Wilga M. Rivers, A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[15]L'Art de conjuguer: Dictionnaire de 12000 verbes (Montréal: Hurtubise, 1980).

B A S I C P E R M U T A T I O N S

Basic allophones attached to tense phonemes: 8 * Five tense occurrences

-e	-es	-ent	present indicative, present subjunctive
-ons	-ont		present indicative, future
-ez			present indicative, imperfect
-ais	-ait	-aient	imperfect, conditional
-ions			imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive
-iez			imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive
-ai	(doublet for -ez)		future
-as	-a		future

*(7 if -ai and -ez are to be considered equivalent)

Basic tense phonemes: 8 (plus 3 past participle morphemes)

	aimer	finir	vendre
present indicative	aim	fini	ven
imperfect	aim	finis(s)	vend
future	aimer	finir	vendr
conditional	aimer	finir	vendr
present subjunctive	aim	finis(s)	vend
	2	3	3
(past participle)	aimé	fini	vendu

Basic morphemes: 14

	tense occurrences
-e	present indicative, present subjunctive
-es	present indicative, present subjunctive
-ent	present indicative, present subjunctive
-ons	present, future
-ez	present, future
-ais	imperfect, conditional
-ait	imperfect, conditional
-aient	imperfect, conditional
-ions	imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive
-iez	imperfect, conditional, present subjunctive
-ai	future
-as	future
-a	future
-ont	future

Tense	avoir: tense morpheme				être: tense morpheme				
present			AI	AVONS			SUIS	SOMMES	
			AS	AVEZ			ES	ÊTES	
			a	ONT			est	SONT	
imperfect	1, 2	av	AIS	IONS	1, 2	ét	AIS	IONS	
	av-		ait	IEZ	ét-		ait	IEZ	
			aient				aient		
future		aur	AI	ONS	ser-	ser	AI	ONS	
	aur-		AS	EZ			AS	EZ	
			a	ONT			a	ONT	
conditional		aur	AIS	IONS	1, 2	ser	AIS	IONS	
	aur-		ait	IEZ	ser-		ait	IEZ	
			aient				aient		
present subjunctive			AIE	AYONS (ions)	1, 2		SOIS	SOYONS (ions)	
	ai/ay-		aies	AYEZ	soi/soy-		soit	SOYEZ	
			ait				soient		
			aient						
	allophones		4	5			5	8	11 basic = 22*
	morphemes		8	6			12	10	23 basic = 36*

*including repetitions

TENSE	VERB:	AIMER		FINIR			VENDRE		
BASIC PHONEME	STEMS:	AIM		FIN			VEND		
Present Indicative									
AI(M)	1, 3	aiØE	ØONS	1, 2	finIS	ISSONS	1, 2	vends	ØONS
FIN(I)	2	Øes	ØEZ	3	it	ISSEZ	3		ØEZ
VEN	3 pl.	Øent				issent			d(t)ENT
Imperfect									
AIM	1, 2	aimAIS	IONS		finISSAIS	ISSIONS		vendAIS	IONS
FINIS	3	ait	IEZ		issait	ISSIEZ		ait	IEZ
VEND	3 pl.	aient			issaient			aient	
Future									
AIMER	1	aimerAI	ONS		finirAI			vendrAI	
FINIR	2	AS	EZ						
VENDR	3	a	ont						
Conditional									
AIMER	1, 2	aimerAIS	IONS		finirAIS			vendrAIS	
FINIR		ait	IEZ						
VENDR	3	aient							
Present Subjunctive									
AIM	1, 3	aimE	IONS		finissE	IONS		vendE	IONS
FINISS	2	es	IEZ		es	IEZ		des	IEZ
VEND	3 pl.	ent			ent			ent	

Past								Total
AIMÉ	allophones	5	4*	6	7	6	4*	32*
FINI	morphemes	12	4	14	7	11		46
VENDU	phonemes	5	4	6	7	7	4	33*

*including repetitions

Tense	tense morpheme	aller			tense morpheme	faire		
present indicative	v/all		VAIS VAS va	allONS all^{EZ} VONT	fai-	1, 2	fAIS fait FONT	faiSONS FAITES
imperfect	all-	1, 2	allAIS ait aient	-IONS -IEZ	fai-		faisAIS etc.	-IONS
future	ir-		irAI AS a	-ONS -EZ -ONT	fer-		ferAI AS	
conditional	ir-	1, 2	irAIS ait aient	IONS IEZ	fer-		ferAIS	
present subjunctive		1, 3	AILLE ailles aillent	ALLIONS ALLIEZ	fass-	1, 3	FASSE fasses fassent	
		allophones	6	8			6	total 20
		morphemes	12	8			14	total 34

PAST
ALLÉ

PAST
FAIT